

C. E. Renson



Professor Ted Renson died peacefully at his home in Spain on 1 July 2005. Ted was born in Tottenham, London. His family lived above his father's dental practice in the Mile End Road. He attended Davenant Foundation School where he was House Captain, Head Boy and Captain of Athletics. During World War II the family were evacuated to Chatteris in the Fens, but young Ted, aged 14, would cycle back to act as a firewatcher (ARP Messenger) during the Blitz, gaining the King's Commendation for Brave Conduct. At 17 years (well nearly; he was younger but lied about his age) he joined the RAF, serving as a wireless operator/gunner, in the rank of Flight Sergeant, flying Lancaster bombing missions over Germany until the end of the war. While waiting for demobilisation from the RAF, he was based in France as part of the Mission Research and Enquiry Service, seeking the whereabouts of aircrew missing in action. On demobilisation he went to work for the Kuwait Oil Company requisitioning motor transport.

After several years, Ted decided he wanted a professional career in either medicine or law. However, he came from a very dental family; his father, two uncles and his brother were dentists. The finance he needed to become a student came from his father with strings

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attached – he was to study dentistry. Ted graduated from 'The London' in 1957 gaining a number of prizes including the Evelyn Sprawson Prize in Dental Surgery. After a house officer post he worked in practice in Weybridge before entering full time academia at 'The London'. He did his PhD with Professor Mike Braden on the physical properties of dentine. He rose to the position of Reader in Conservative Dentistry before taking a Chair in Conservative Dentistry at the University of Hong Kong in 1978. He was one of those who established The Prince Philip Dental Hospital and on his retirement in 1987 was made the first Emeritus Professor of the dental school.

Ted established *Dental Update* in 1973 and remained as Editorial Director until 1996. The journal was hugely innovative for the dental scene of 1973. It was intended as a means of continuing education for general practitioners. Authors were asked to write in straightforward English, they were paid a fee and the journal was illustrated in full colour, a novelty at that time. In 1996 he became Editor of *Primary Dental Care*, the journal of the Faculty of General Dental Practitioners. By now Ted was living in Spain but was still a very active dental journalist and editor, attending numerous conferences worldwide.

Ted served on a number of Government appointed bodies, including the Department of Health and the Health Education Council. He worked on many BDA committees and was President of the Southern Counties Branch 1976-1977. He was also very involved in the work of the FDI, chairing working groups and writing technical reports. His awards and

distinctions include Life Membership of the British Dental Association, the American Dental Association and the International Association for Dental Research. He was awarded the Geoffrey Layton Slack Memorial Medal by 'The London' and elected a Fellow of both the British Dental Association and the Faculty of General Dental Practitioners. He was made a Freeman and Liveryman of the City of London in 1975.

Ted may have originally been a reluctant dentist, but he made an enormous contribution to his profession and derived huge satisfaction and pleasure from it. To his students in both London and Hong Kong he was an informed, helpful, sympathetic and uniquely popular teacher. Through *Dental Update* he has facilitated the education of every dentist in the land. He was himself a perpetual student, working on a law degree at the time of his death. Information received shortly afterwards confirmed that although unable to start his dissertation for the LLB degree, he had added a Diploma in Medical Law to his numerous dental achievements. To many he was a dear friend with an irrepressible sense of humour. He seemed to have the gift of eternal youth, maturing to around 60 years of age and then never getting any older. To Sue he was a dear father and a beloved Gramps to Natasha, Davina and Lisa. Hilly, his wife of 26 years, totally captured the heart of this remarkable man. Ted Renson will be greatly missed by us all.

E. A. M. Kidd, N. B. Pitts